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HELLENISM AND HEBRAISM.

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TO SUM up the spirit and temper of two great peoples like the Greeks and the Hebrews within the compass of a brief paper will seem possible only to one who has not rightly measured the task. The Greeks were too versatile and the Hebrews too profound to lend themselves to such summary treatment. We can hope to do no more than point out one or two of the more salient features that distinguish the Hellenic from the Hebraic type of thought. Of course, between these peoples, as perhaps between all peoples, there exist more points of contact than of conflict. The New Testament was written in Greek by Hebrews; that is a point of vast significance. It means that there is no fundamental antagonism between these two types, widely as they differ. No doubt to one who has trained his taste on the models of classical style, the style of the New Testament will often seem lame and barbarous. Yet the fact that there exists a living and demonstrable continuity between the language of Plato and that of Paul—the fact that the great watchwords of the New Testament, such as *πίστις* and *δικαιοσύνη*, are to be found everywhere in classical literature, and have been developed by a perfectly natural and historical process into the rich connotation which they bear in the pages of the gospels and the epistles—is enough to suggest that the genius of the Greek and Hebrew peoples was, though vastly different, yet not fundamentally distinct. But we are at present more concerned with their differences than with their similarity. And to ascertain where precisely the difference lay, it may be well to begin at the outside; for the form in which a people expresses itself will always be in some more or less faithful correspondence with its inner thought.

Now, of form, in the classical sense of the word, Hebrew has little or none. The ceaseless repetition of the particle *Waw* in the Old Testament and of *δέ* in the New; the co-ordination

of thoughts of different value which the Greek would have expressed by some subtle subordination; the existence of practically only two tenses which have to do duty, not only for themselves and sundry other tenses, but for moods as well—all these things point to a certain syntactical helplessness, which is only the grammatical side of the Hebrew indifference to form. Perhaps the critic who spoke of the quotation in the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians (5:14) as a “broken fragment of shapeless barbaric verse,”

ἔγειρε, ὁ καθεύδων,
καὶ ἀνάστα ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν,
καὶ ἐπιφαύσει σοι ὁ χριστός,

forgot that we are not the best judges of the impression that such a verse produced on the ears of a Greek Christian; yet few would deny that it is, at any rate, a long step from that to the elegance of Pindar.

This disregard of form—a disregard which, in the light of the second commandment, we are almost entitled to pronounce religious—is also strikingly seen in the ease with which a Hebrew historian sets side by side two different and often palpably contradictory accounts of the same event, and also in the occasional disregard of inherent congruity with which two conflicting versions are fused together. At bottom, this is an artistic defect; and where the Hebrew mind is weak, the Greek is strong. Aristotle, in the *Poetics*,¹ lays down the law that, in a tragedy, nothing is more important than the arrangement of the incident; it is the *ψυχὴ τῆς τραγῳδίας*, more important even than the correct delineation of character. Reverse this, and you have approximately the Hebrew conception of the relation of character to incident. No doubt, even in Hebrew literature, the arrangement of the incident is often highly artistic: nothing could be more dramatic than the stories of Joseph and Esther. But, in the main, to the Hebrew it is character that is the be-all and end-all. Hebrew genius is subjective, spontaneous; it does not discuss, examine, compare, criticise. This disqualified the Hebrew from the successful pursuit of philosophy. He has hardly any par-

¹vi, 9.

ticle to correspond to the Greek *ἄρα* or *οὖν*; when he says "therefore," *לָכֵן*, he is usually not concluding an argument, but denouncing a judgment. The Greek keeps himself well in hand; the Hebrew lets himself go. Greek may be simple as well as Hebrew; but the one is the simplicity of art, the other of nature. Hebrew may, indeed, often give us the artlessness which is higher than art; but it is not conscious art. The Hebrew cared much less for the form than for the content. His thoughts were inspirations of the most high God; as for the words, "be not anxious beforehand what ye shall speak; but *whatsoever shall be given you* in that hour, that speak ye, for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit."

It is partly perhaps this consciousness of God that gives to Hebrew literature its spontaneity in comparison with Greek. "Men spoke from God, *being borne on by the Holy Spirit*." How wide is the gulf between this and the conscious effort put forth by the typical Greek—by Demosthenes, for example, who is said to have acquired his style by copying out the history of Thucydides eight times; or by Plato, after whose death a tablet is said to have been found containing the opening words of the *Republic*, *κατέβην χθὲς εἰς Πειραῖα*, written out in all the possible permutations! To Plato, the most serious and beautiful-souled of the Greeks, style still counts for much; besides being one of the great original thinkers of the world, he is also a conscious literary artist. But the Hebrew world which set the hope of its redemption in the suffering servant, whose vision was marred, and who had no beauty that men should desire him, is a world in which grace of form or of language, though very far from absent, is not the object of the same conscious effort, for the realities of the inner life and thought are all-absorbing. The second commandment gives expression to one of the deepest instincts of the Hebrew nature at its best: "Thou shalt not make unto thee the likeness of any form." The true Hebrew, like his God, looks upon the heart; the Greek is as much concerned to impress the ear and the eye as the soul. This does not mean, of course, that the Greek cared supremely for style, and very little for content; for no one can throw his thought into a truly

artistic mold till he has completely mastered it; but it means that the Greek always retains the power of standing outside the matter with which he is dealing, of looking round upon it with a critical eye, and refusing to be mastered by it.

The note, then, of Hebrew will be reality, with enthusiasm at least for moral interests. It is characteristic that the word *רָדָה* is relatively more frequent in Hebrew than the corresponding words in other literatures, and it occurs often in quaint combinations, as does its equivalent *δωάω* in the New Testament. The impetuous *צֶדֶק צֶדֶק תִּרְדֶּה*,² which, whether we regard its use of the verb, its repetition of the noun, or its fierce insistence on character, is one of the most characteristic things in the Old Testament, offered a stumbling-block to the Greek translator, whose tame equivalent is *δικαίως τὸ δίκαιον δώξῃ*. The note of Hellenism, on the other hand, is balance, symmetry, an impartial distribution of sympathy, not only on the moral side of life, but in every sphere of human activity, the moral hardly even predominating. To him more truly than to most could the lines of Terence be applied: "Humani nihil a me alienum puto." In his history, his poetry, and his philosophy he preserves an even balance of sympathy; he cannot even look virtue straight in the face, but has to define it as the mean between two vices. This is perhaps only another way of saying that he contemplates the world from a predominantly æsthetic, rather than from an ethical or religious, standpoint. Naturally this statement is true only with great and serious restrictions. Much of Greek tragic poetry could fairly be called religious, even in a narrow sense of that word; and the work of Herodotus is the Greek attempt to justify the ways of God to men by showing on a gigantic scale how pride is followed by the vengeance of heaven. But though large and important tracts of Greek literature sometimes assume a semi-religious form, it is still true that the Greek diffuses his sympathy, with something like even-handed impartiality and with no special regard for moral considerations, over all the parties that file before him. He does not see them in the light of God, and so is under no obligation

² Deut. 16 : 20.

to take sides. He is attracted by the humanity that is in them both—in the one not less than in the other.

It is startling to find how far the great Greek writers carry their impartiality—an impartiality which we might mistake for indifference, did we not remember that it is conditioned by the power of wide and generous sympathy. It is in a Trojan home that Homer has given us the purest picture of domestic love and conjugal happiness. Herodotus, too, does ample justice to the nobler qualities of the Persians. It is no part of Greek literary policy to vilify opponents; and we need not resort to the subtle assumption that the glorification of the enemy is intended to enhance the greatness of the victory over them. Rather does it seem due to what Julia Wedgwood has called the "spirit which insists on hearing the other side." No writer possesses this dramatic impartiality in so high a degree as Thucydides. To those who can read between the lines it is quite clear that the Spartan Brasidas is his hero, and the same spirit of fairness is everywhere. It was no congenial story of triumph that he had to tell, no brilliant tale like that of Herodotus—of how the might of Persia had dashed itself to pieces against the bravery of Greece. But he told it with matchless impartiality—the story of the ruin of the cause of the city he must have loved—how one bright day her splendid fleet set sail, amid the shouts of the people gathered on the shore; how drink-offerings were poured out to the gods, and their blessing invoked; and how those high hopes were slowly crushed by the tidings of disaster upon disaster; how at length the Athenian cause was shattered, her men suffering sorrows too great for tears, and few out of many returned home. There is no rancor here against the Athenians who had banished him, nor yet against the Syracusans who had crushed his countrymen; it is simply a calm recital of historical fact, colored neither by moral nor by party considerations. Syracuse came as much within the sweep of his historical vision as Athens, and therefore demanded and received the same historical justice.

There is a passage in the biography of Thucydides by Marcellinus which sheds a curious light upon this Greek, or at any rate Thucydidean, genius for impartiality. He tells us that Thu-

cydides spent large sums of money on the Lacedæmonians and the Athenians, so that he might have accurate information of all that was done and said during the war. "This he might have learned," says Marcellinus, "from the Athenians alone, but it was his object to write a truthful narrative of the events, and it was natural that the Athenians should misrepresent the reports to their own advantage, often saying '*We* conquered,' when they had done nothing of the kind."³ Thucydides tells us himself that he scrutinized the accounts of speeches or events as closely as possible, and that he experienced great difficulty in the investigation as there were often conflicting accounts of the same incidents due to the partiality or the bad memories of his informants.⁴ To this stern impartiality he makes no exception even in favor of himself. He refers to his own banishment in a tone of the most complete disinterestedness, merely to account for the special opportunities which his position gave him of following the chances of the war. "It was my lot," he says, "to live in exile for twenty years after my command at Amphipolis. I thus became conversant with both parties—indeed, as an exile, I saw most of the Peloponnesians—and was enabled to study the events more at my leisure."⁵ Here is impartiality at its zenith. No Hebrew could have written that; he would have imparted more personal feeling to it. The passion of the Hebrew historian for his people and his God beats behind the plainest narratives. There is never wanting something of that feeling which inspired the prayer of Moses: "If thou wilt not forgive the sin of this people, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written;" or of St. Paul: "I could wish that myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake." Almost all the work of the Hebrew historian was inspired either by a love for his people, or by a desire to illustrate the moral order, or rather the divine discipline and love in history. His work is instinct with religious enthusiasm; it glows with a pas-

³ σκοπὸς γὰρ ἦν αὐτῷ τὴν ἀλήθειαν τῶν πραγμάτων συγγράφαι, εἰκὸς δὲ ἦν Ἀθηναίους πρὸς τὸ χρήσιμον ἀπαγγέλλοντας τὸ ἐαυτῶν ψεύδεσθαι, καὶ λέγειν πολλάκις ὡς ἡμεῖς ἐνίκησαμεν, οὐ νικήσαντες.

⁴ i, 22, 3.

⁵ v, 26, 5.

sion, distorted—Thucydides might have said—on the one side, in the interests of nationality, on the other, in the interests of righteousness.

Enough has been said to show that there was a wide difference of temper and character between the Greeks and the Hebrews. To show how deep this difference really lay, we shall dwell for a little on what we may call points of contact and conflict between Hebraism and Hellenism; and we shall find that, numerous as the former seem to be, they only serve to strengthen our conviction of the deep, though not radical, difference between the two peoples. Numerous passages could be culled from every period of Greek literature, in which we seem to hear the echo of the Old Testament or the prophecy of the New. We find Themistocles giving thanks to heaven for the Greek triumph over the Persians, in language which reminds us forcibly of Joshua's farewell address to Israel: "For it is not we who have wrought this deliverance, but the gods and heroes, who were jealous that one man should reign over Asia and Europe, and he unholy and wicked."⁶ The aged knight Phoenix, in Homer, urges the value of prayer in words that recall the goodness of the Father who hears in secret and gives men the victory over sin. "Even the very gods can bend. . . . Prayers are daughters of the great Zeus, halting and wrinkled and of eyes askance, that have their task withal to go in the steps of Sin. For Sin is strong and fleet of foot, wherefore she far out-runneeth all prayers, and goeth before them over all the earth, making men fall, and Prayers follow behind to heal the harm."⁷ Striking, too, is the couplet in the Anthology:

He who enters the fragrant temple must be holy.
And holiness is purity of mind.⁸

There is something almost distinctively Christian in the line of Menander: "True life is living not for self alone." Plato, the most profound of all the Greek seers, must have looked upon life with Christian eyes when, in the *Symposium* (203) he wrote:

⁶ HERODOTUS, viii, 109, 4.

⁷ *Iliad*, ix, 496.

⁸ ἀγνὸν χρὴ νηοῖο θυώδεος ἐντὸς ἰόντα
ἔμμεναι· ἀγνείη δ' ἔστι φρονεῖν δαΐα.

"Love is always poor, and is far from being fair and tender as the many suppose, but is lean, ill-favored, shoeless and houseless, a poor, penniless wanderer, sleeping at doorways, or on waysides with the sky above him."

But there is no single Greek book which seems to present both the points of contact and of conflict so strikingly as the *Ethics* of Aristotle; and we shall conclude our summary of the former by calling attention to three passages—though the number could be greatly increased—which come astonishingly near to the spirit of the New Testament and even to its phraseology. "A man is not proved to be just," he tells us, "by doing a just thing; he must do it in the spirit of a just man." Again: "It is a strongly marked feature of the liberal man to go to excess in giving, so as to leave too little for himself; for disregard of self is part of his character"⁹—a tolerably close approximation to the saying: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." But the correspondence reaches perhaps its highest point in Aristotle's description of the good as that which is peculiarly a man's own and can scarce be taken away from him.¹⁰ Who that reads this can help thinking of the peace of God, which the world can neither give nor take away?

But great and often surprising as is the resemblance between the Hebraic and the Hellenic spirit, it only serves to throw into sharper relief the deep-seated difference. To balance the passages quoted, many more could be adduced which could have come from no Hebrew pen—passages in which the great and guiding thoughts of Hebraism are characteristically absent. "Happiness," says Aristotle, "plainly requires external goods;" and "the happy man is one who exercises his faculties in accordance with perfect excellence, being duly furnished with external goods for a full term of years, who shall continue to live so, and shall die as he lived."¹¹ We cannot help wondering what he would have thought of Him who had not where to lay His head, and who yet lived in the blessed and abiding fellowship of the Father. Again, it is a far cry from the dictum that "virtue depends upon ourselves and vice likewise"¹² to the confession that

⁹ iv, 1, 18.

¹⁰ i, 5, 4.

¹¹ i, 10, 15.

¹² iii, 5, 2.

our sufficiency is of God. Again, in Aristotle's discussion of temperance there is no trace of the thought that this is a duty to God as well as to ourselves, our bodies being temples of the living God. Plato, in the *Phædo*, works out the thought expressed in the proverb *σῶμα σῆμα*, that the body is a prison; Paul, too, cries in a moment of transport: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But Plato's desire to escape from the body was inspired by the thought of the evil of matter; Paul's, by the thought of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The typical Greek has no sense of the struggle with sin, and no sympathy with the cry, "Oh wretched man that I am!" He has no conception of the world or the individual as needing redemption, and so feels no obligation to exercise a redemptive activity in the sphere of human sin or suffering. The Greek ideal, as Aristotle reminds us,¹³ is *θεωρία*, not action, but contemplation. "If we were to go through the whole list of virtues," he says, "we should find that all action is petty and unworthy of the gods: their life then must consist in contemplation."¹⁴ Contrast this with: "My Father worketh hitherto and I work."

On the whole, the Greek tends to emphasize the value of principle; the Hebrew, of personality—neither, of course, to the exclusion of the other. Plato refers all things in the world of being and of thought to "the unhypothetical first principle," that is, "the good." But though, in his glowing pages, this is not the cold and lifeless abstraction which most first principles are, it is a long way from the living simplicity and power of the Hebrew Jehovah. The same tendency—natural, of course, in a philosophical discussion—to emphasize the importance of principles, comes out in the great phrase of the *Ethics* that good actions are to be done *τοῦ καλοῦ ἕνεκα*—for the sake of that which is *καλόν*, noble. And yet both Plato and Aristotle feel the need of supplementing principle, at least for most men, by an appeal to personality: Plato, when he tells us in a tone, half of hope, half of despair, that the world will never be right till philosophers are kings; and Aristotle, who practically concedes the necessity of reasoning in a circle on moral questions, when

¹³ *Nicomachean Ethics*, x, 7, 1.

¹⁴ x, 8, 7.

he says, "that is truly valuable and pleasant which is so to the earnest man, the *σπουδαῖος*."¹⁵ Such words force us to feel that the Greek heart, in its desire to solve the world-riddle, yearned no less than the Hebrew for "one like unto the Son of man."

When the Greek forgets himself and instead of keeping rigidly to his discussion of principle, draws the picture of his ideal man, we feel how much better adapted the Hebrew world was than the Greek to teach humanity the harder lessons and the nobler ideals of religion. The high-minded or great-souled man of Aristotle, who may fairly be taken as the Greek ideal, is one who claims much and deserves much; one who will not run into petty dangers, but will be ready to incur a great danger, feeling that life is not a thing worth keeping at all costs; one who will be more willing to confer favors than to ask them; one who will not do many things, but great things, and notable, one who speaks the whole truth, hates gossip, and despises flattery; one who will not run along swinging his arms any more than he would commit an act of injustice; one whose gait is slow, whose voice is deep, and whose speech is measured: why should he excite himself when nothing is of very much importance to him?¹⁶ It is only fair to remember that if the high-minded man claims much, it is because he deserves much: high-mindedness is impossible without the union of all the virtues. Still we cannot help feeling, with a tragic intensity of which Aristotle did not dream, that his high-minded man "seems to look down upon everything," and to exhibit in his character a certain superciliousness which is the very antipodes, not only of the Christian, but even of the finer Hebrew type of humility. For the Hebrew consciousness was always overshadowed by the presence of God, and this produced—not indeed always, but very often—a temper of self-dissatisfaction which we rarely find among the Greeks. The ideal man of the fifteenth psalm has several points in common with his Greek brother; but the opening question of the psalm carries us into a different world of religious feeling, by contemplating human character in the light of God.

Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tent?
Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

¹⁵x, 6, 5.

¹⁶*Nicomachean Ethics*, iv, 3.

The conception of God made all the difference. It was this that made the Hebrew feel that when he had done his best he was still an unprofitable servant.

This will be a convenient place to say a word about Greek religion. It has been said that Greek religion is a religion of this world. Like most epigrammatic utterances, this is only half a truth. It is true, indeed, that though the death of Œdipus is invested with solemn glory, there is no hint of a blessedness that will be his in the next world; but, on the other hand, Antigone consoles herself with a hope, that is almost a certainty, that she will find in the other world the love she has missed in this. In the main, however, it is true that Greek religion concerns itself chiefly with this world. It seeks its compensations here, and is disappointed when it does not find them. The few words in which Thucydides sums up the character and fate of the unfortunate Nicias sound like the expression of perplexity and disappointment. "Of all the Greeks of my time," says the historian, "he least deserved so miserable an end, for he lived in the performance of all that was accounted virtue."¹⁷

The popular Greek conception of deity is singularly vacillating; it hardly seems to know whether God is one or many, moral or immoral. Tales the most noble and the most base jostle each other on the pages of the poets. But, in spite of this confusion—a confusion which tends to vanish with the progress of Greek thought—there are elements in Greek theology making for monotheism and morality from the very first. Even in the Homeric times, which rejoiced in a multitude of gods, there is one who is Father. This is the beginning of that feeling which finally learned to designate the deity in terms of the most rarefied metaphysical unity as *τὸ ὅν*. The tragic poets stand midway between the popular polytheism of their contemporaries and the philosophical monotheism of Plato, with more leaning to the latter than the former. A chorus in the *Agamemnon*¹⁸ begins an appeal to Zeus with a peculiarly un-Hebraic hesitation:

Zeus, whosoe'er he be,
If this be the name he loves;

¹⁷ vii, 86, 5.

¹⁸ 160 f.

and it is said that "some (τις) Apollo or Pan or Zeus will send a late-avenging fury."¹⁹ The monotheistic instinct was also to some extent satisfied by the Greek conception of *Moîra*, or Fate, as a power which lay behind both gods and men.

On the metaphysical side of Greek theology there are hints, and more than hints, of monotheism. What is to be said of the ethical side? What was the character of the god or gods? Human feelings are ascribed to the gods by Greek and Hebrew alike, with this difference, that the anthropopathy, as it has been called, of the Hebrews—that is, the ascription of fear or wrath, scorn or repentance—is hardly ever repulsive, while that of the Greek is often shocking even to a not over-refined moral sense, though this is true mainly of the earlier poetical and popular conceptions. Homer and Hesiod, for example, are fiercely attacked by the poet-philosopher Xenophanes for having "ascribed to the gods all that is blame and shame among men—theft, adultery, and mutual deceit." Pindar, too, has not scrupled to alter stories discreditable to the gods to suit the high purposes of his own pure verse. For the highest, and therefore not the average, conception we must turn to Plato, who, in a trenchant protest against popular ideas, vigorously maintains that we must conceive of God as the author of good only, and not of evil also; and also as wholly unchangeable, and so incapable of the metamorphoses which figure so prominently in poetry. But more may be learned of the typical Greek mind from the historians and the poets than from Plato. They tell us that the gods love the good and hate the bad, especially the proud, and, curiously enough, not only the proud, but the successful, at any rate the too successful. This divine jealousy of human success is one of the familiar marks of Greek theology. Both the ethical and the anthropopathic views of deity are combined in the passage of Herodotus already quoted, where the gods are said to be jealous that one man should rule over both Asia and Europe, and he, too, unholy and wicked. The gods were bound to hate Xerxes because he was wicked: they were no less bound to hate him—so thought the Greek—because

¹⁹ *Agamemnon*, 55-59.

he was powerful. Prosperity seems to have been the only crime of Polycrates. The gods are jealous of men who stand head and shoulders above their fellows, in somewhat the same way as Hebrew tradition ascribes to Jehovah jealousy of the builders of the tower of Babel. "Deity is always jealous," says Herodotus in another passage, "and delights in confusion."²⁰ The whole history of Herodotus is a brilliant and impressive sermon on the text, "The gods love to bring down high things." The Persian disasters were the divine vengeance on *ὑβρις*. This thought brings us back to the principle with which we started—the Greek love of balance—and shows us that the gods were conceived to be governed by the same passion for symmetry that ought to determine human action. He who had been guilty of *ὑβρις*, he who was too prosperous or too rich, must be punished by the Greek god of proportion.

With this thought let us pass to the consideration of the Hebrew and the Greek view of suffering. It is well known how the Hebrew writers solved, or rather approached the solution of the suffering of the good man; how the man who did what was right was divinely rewarded with material prosperity, while misfortune was the divine curse on sin; how the sufferings of the exile taught men the inadequacy of the older solution; how an unknown prophet softened the bitterness of the sorrow by learning that the servant of Jehovah may be wounded to heal transgressions that were not his own; how the great writer of the book of Job found comfort in a larger thought of God; how at length the problem received its living solution in the cross of Christ. No such powerful comprehension of the place and meaning of suffering in human life has been given by the Greeks. They have taught us much, but it was not their mission to teach us that. Still, Greek literature does answer this problem in a way of its own, and there can be no better point for starting the discussion than the famous passage in the *Poetics*, in which Aristotle lays down the conditions of a successful tragedy: "We must not have good men," he tells us, "changing from prosperity to adversity—this would not be pitiful or terrible, but

²⁰ i, 32, 2: τὸ θεῖον . . . φθονερόν τε καὶ ταραχώδες.

shocking—nor bad men changing from adversity to prosperity, nor very wicked men from prosperity to adversity, for this evokes sympathy, but one neither pre-eminent for virtue or justice, nor falling into adversity through vice or wickedness, but falling δι' ἁμαρτίαν τινά, being a person of great repute and prosperity."²² That is to say, where there is suffering, there must be some ἁμαρτία—not sin, but flaw—to account for it. But this only restates the problem without solving it, for the difficulty remains that the punishment is often in such pathetic disproportion to the crime, if crime it can be called. True, when we scan a tragic character closely, there is always some ἁμαρτία; in *Œdipus* there was rashness, temper, impetuosity; in *Antigone*—well, it is more difficult to condemn her, for if she has broken the law of the state and should suffer, she has kept the higher law of the family and should be saved. Still, from the Greek point of view, it could be urged that she showed a boldness both of deed and word which was not seemly in a woman. Here, at least, is a ἁμαρτία which would satisfy the Greek view of character, though surely it hardly merits such a tragic penalty; and so the riddle remains. But here and there the light breaks through. The mystery of suffering can in part be explained; it may be due, for example, to ancestral guilt. This is the idea so magnificently worked out in the *Oresteia* of *Æschylus*, and in this conception two ideas meet which partly reconcile us to innocent suffering. The one is that the guilt of ancestors is in some sense our own, as we are bound to them by a common life and spirit; the other is that the tragedy ultimately comes about through the exercise of free will on the part of the sufferer.

Further, suffering teaches: there are few thoughts commoner in Greek literature than this, which was stereotyped in the phrase παθήματα μαθήματα. It may help to sweeten and purify character, as it did with *Œdipus*, whose old age is invested with a grace which his middle life knew not; or it may establish a higher law, as the death of *Antigone* wrought a victory for the family which her obedience to the state could never have done. Often, too, there is some kind of compensation to the sufferer, some-

²² xiii, 2, 3.

times in this world, sometimes in that which is to come. To the old, blind, and broken-hearted king comes the honor of burial in the sacred grove of the Eumenides; and "the passing of the man was not with lamentation, or in sickness and suffering, but, above mortal's, wonderful."²² Antigone, too, finds comfort in the thought of the future. "When I come there—such is the hope I cherish—I shall find love with my father, love with thee, my mother, and love with thee, true brother."²³ And, besides the possible compensations of this world or the next, the sufferer always retains a consciousness of his own integrity of which no misfortune can rob him. "True worth," says Aristotle, "shines out in the calm endurance of many great misfortunes;" and yet his hero, as we have seen, is not a sufferer. For the adequate recognition of the beauty of sorrow we must go to that most Christian of all the Greek thinkers, Plato, whose rapt words seem to fall from the lips of one who had gazed prophetically upon the cross of Christ. For Plato tells of one who had done all "that he could for his people, and had received from them nothing but scorn; so, in the storm of dust and sleet, he seeks the shelter of a wall; and seeing the rest of mankind full of wickedness, he is content if only he can live his own life and be pure from evil or unrighteousness, and depart in peace and goodwill, with bright hopes."²⁴ With a still deeper glance into the mysteries of God, he sees one who is the best of men, going on his way in his nobleness and simplicity, yet thought to be the worst of men; he sees him scourged, racked, bound, subjected to every kind of evil, and in the end crucified.²⁵ Here Greek thought becomes Christian. As there was one Jew, in the person of the great prophet of the exile, to whom the cross would not have been a stumbling-block, so there was at least one Greek, in the person of Plato, to whom it would not have been foolishness.

The consideration of the suffering of the innocent leads us by an easy transition to the Greek thought of the sadness of all human life. So keen was the Greek sense of beauty, and so numerous its sources of satisfaction, so versatile was the genius

²² *Œdipus Coloneus*, 1663 ff.

²⁴ *Republic*, vi, 496.

²³ *Antigone*, 897 ff.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, ii, 361.

of the people and so triumphant in its versatility, that one would have expected them to be possessed by the feeling which thrilled the poet of a later day: "Joy was it in that day to be alive." Yet, this is very far from being the predominant note of Greek literature. The consciousness of the presence of God and of fellowship with him gave to the Hebrew, even when humbled by a sense of sin, and overpowered by the thought that he was but a stranger and sojourner upon the earth, a sense of peace which not only reconciled him to his lot in the world, but touched his sorrow with gladness, gave him a certain delight in life, and sometimes, though not always, a fearlessness at the contemplation of death, to which the Greek, for the most part, remained a stranger. This note of sadness is struck as early as Homer. "There is nothing more piteous," says Zeus to the weeping horses of Achilles, "than a man among all things that breathe and creep upon the earth,"²⁶ and gently or loudly this dirge is heard from the beginning to the end. Solon told Cræsus of two young men of Argos, strong, and victors in the public games, who had drawn their mother in a car six whole miles to the festival of Hera. The proud mother prayed that Hera would grant her sons the greatest blessing men could receive; and they fell softly asleep in the temple, and never woke again.²⁷ Verily, all of us who live are no more than phantoms, fleeting shades, the shadow of a dream—that is the burden of tragic poetry. No wise man will crave length of years; for "the long years," sings the chorus in the *Ædipus Coloneus*,²⁸ "lay up full many things nearer unto grief than joy; but, as for their delights, their place shall know them no more, when the doom of Hades is suddenly revealed, without marriage song, or lyre, or dance—even Death at the last." The whole passage strikingly recalls Qoheleth, that least biblical of all biblical books; and the chorus goes on in a strain that not only rises again and again from the Greek heart in every period of its life, but that often expresses itself in almost the same words: "Not to be born is, past all prizing, best; but when a man hath seen the light, this is next best by far, that with all speed he should go to the land whence he hath come."²⁹

²⁶ *Iliad*, xvii, 443-47.²⁷ HERODOTUS, i, 31.²⁸ 1215 ff.²⁹ 1225 f.

But it is perhaps in the later poets of the *Anthology*, who had seen the decay of all that was most distinctively Greek, and were peculiarly impressed by the frailty of all human things, that the melancholy of life is most persistently reiterated. Rufinus sends a bunch of flowers to a girl with the words :

Garland thyself with these, and cease thy pride :
Thou like the garland, too, dost flower and fall.³⁰

How can life but be sad, when we have only "chance as pilot" of our way?³¹ So "all is laughter, and all is dust, and all is naught."³² "Weeping was I born," mourns one, "and weeping I die; 'mid plenteous weeping did I pass my life." There is deep pathos as well as humor in the lines :

Here lie I, Dionysius of Tarsus, aged sixty years;
I never wed; I wish my sire had never.³³

Very touching too is this epitaph on a baby :

"Me, a babe, that was but tasting life, fate snatched away, whether for good or ill I know not. Oh greedy death! Why didst thou cruelly snatch me in my babyhood? wherefore thy haste? are we not all thine in the end?"³⁴

Now, it would be rash to assert that the pathos of life finds no expression in Hebrew Literature. Sadness there must be in any true transcript of life; and most of all where men deeply feel, as the Hebrews did, the sin or transiency of the world. It was voiced now and then by psalmists who felt that they were strangers on the earth, and that man flourisheth as the flower of the field. "What is your life?" asks a Christian writer. "For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." But how does it come that Greece is so sad? How is it that those laughter-loving children of the purple mountains and the sunlit sea, who spent their days amid the

³⁰ ταῦτα στεψαμένη λήξον μέγανυχος εὐδῶσα·
ἀνθεῖς καὶ λήγεις καὶ σὺ καὶ ὁ στέφανος.

³¹ τὴν δὲ τύχην βιότοιο κυβερνήτειραν ἔχοντες.

³² πάντα γέλως καὶ πάντα κόνις καὶ πάντα τὸ μηδέν.

³³ ἐξηκοντούτης Διονύσιος ἐνθάδε κείμεναι
Ταρσεύς, μὴ γήμας· αἶθε δὲ μήδ' ὁ πατήρ.

³⁴ ἄρτι με γευόμενον ζωῆς βρέφος ἥρπασε δαίμων
οὐκ οἶδ' εἴτ' ἀγαθῶν αἴτιος εἴτε κακῶν·
ἀπλήρωτ' Ἀἰδᾶ, τί με νήπιον ἥρπασας ἐχθρῶς;
τί σπεύδεις; οὐ σοὶ πάντες ὀφειλόμεθα;

inspiration of blue skies and valleys of bewitching beauty, who at festive seasons listened to the most rhythmic and melodious word-music and looked upon the fairest sculptured forms that ever came from the heart of man—how is it that this people of all peoples should have felt so overpoweringly that life was but laughter and vanity? This feeling of the tragedy of life which comes with such a shock of surprise upon those who have been only impressed by the bright and vivacious genius of Greece and by the beauty and splendor of her creations, was due, partly to that artistic balance of mind which impelled her to face both sides of a great question, and to see life in the shadow of death; partly also it was due to her history and experience, and partly no doubt to the absence of any penetrating consciousness of God. She had seen, as early as Homer, in the fall of the autumn leaf, a prophecy of the fate of every human life. She had seen the decline and fall of at least one great empire. During the Persian and the Peloponnesian wars—that is, through all the period of her real greatness in literature, politics, and enterprise—there can have been few families which had not lost a member in battle. Small wonder that, with such an experience, Greece should have felt the pathos of life. But most of all, no doubt, was this feeling due to the fact that the typical Greek whose ideal was self-sufficiency, had no sense of fellowship with God. He did not walk through this world before God or with Him, and so knew nothing of the joy of this communion, or of its power to banish fear and sorrow. At the very bottom, it is the consciousness of God that made life so different for the Hebrew and the Greek. It is this consciousness that is responsible for most of the serious divergences between the temper and aspirations of those two great peoples. It was this that inspired the Hebrew with his passion for morality and religion. It was this that made him a worshiper, while the Greek remained an artist and a critic. It was this that lightened the mystery of suffering, lifted much of life's sadness, and helped the Hebrew to overcome the world. The Greek might have said: "We have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear," but no one could have said with such passion or truth as the Hebrew: "Mine eye hath seen thee."